THE REIGN OF GOD

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THE REIGN OF GOD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE GLEAM
WONDERS OF THE HIMALAYA
BUT IN OUR LIVES
THE COMING COUNTRY
LIFE IN THE STARS

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THE REIGN OF GOD

A DRAMA

BY

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

Edmund 1863

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PREFACE

As a young man the life of Jesus made no appeal whatever to me. He was represented as God, as perfect, and as sinless. And if he *could* not sin, and could not really be killed, his life was of no use as a practical example and guide to one who most certainly could sin and could die. Consequently, the death of Nelson was in hard fact a more inspiring event to me than the Crucifixion. And in my boyish way I inwardly resented the false sentiment I was expected to entertain for what seemed to me a make-believe life and death.

Thus did I start in life. But steadily through the last forty years the significance of the greatest of all lives has been growing on me. Seeley's "Ecce Homo" gave the initial impulse in the right direction. Here, at last, was a Jesus that I could lay hold of and understand. He began to be more human, more one of ourselves—not a being out of a fundamentally different world from ours. I should not now say that Seeley had caught the full significance of Jesus' life. *Enthusiasm* for humanity is far too mild an expression for that spirit in Jesus which he in turn had caught from the Holy Spirit glowing at white heat in the

heart of the universe and which he was burning to impart to mankind. But Seeley *had* brought Jesus into living touch with us ordinary men who walk this earth. And my interest in "lives" of Jesus grew. First Renan I read, then Didon, and so on through a succession of lives till I came to Schweitzer's summary of them all, and on to the peculiarly interesting Jewish life by Klausner and to the most recent lives by Papini, Chesterton, Wilton Rix, Middleton Murry, and Bishop Gore. And what has greatly impressed me is that down to this very year, and even after the convulsion of the Great War, the minds of the ablest men should still be turned to the life of Jesus. The life of one who could make such an unprecedented impression is evidently of incomparably higher interest to mankind than any other.

And the conclusion which has emerged in my own mind from a study of various lives of Jesus during all these years is that while we cannot rely upon the Gospels for an exact story of his life, or trust them for a *verbatim* record of his sayings, we *can* gather from them the general impression which he made upon the men of his time. So adding to this impression the general experience of holy men in all ages and in all countries, my aim in the following drama has been to convey the essential spirit that Jesus was trying to com-

municate to the world, and which we at this distance may be better able to detect than those whose very closeness to him was a hindrance. Contemporaries do not usually see the greatness of great men. Even less likely are the contemporaries of Jesus to have seen the essentials of one who was infinitely more than any merely *great* man.

I have used the form of drama as the better method of communicating the spirit of Jesus than the ordinary "life." And I trust that it will be found to be so constructed that producers will not have difficulty in adapting it to particular requirements. But I have written it more with a view to its being read than to its being acted; for it is only occasionally that it would be possible to produce such a play, whereas it might frequently be read not only by individuals in private, but also by expert readers in public.

F. E. Y.

P.S.—Only since the Preface and Drama were written have I become aware that the pilgrimage play by Christine Stevenson which is acted annually at Hollywood, in California, is also styled "Life of the Christ," and deals with the life of Christ as a whole.

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INTRODUCTION

THE one thing that really matters in life is a proper relationship with that Creative Spirit of the universe which brought us into being and which must be working in us and in all the world about us every moment of our days. Nothing else is of like importance. If we work harmoniously with that Spirit, all is well. If there are jars and discords between us and it, all is ill. That stands to reason. It is also a matter of experience. We may observe the same result in ourselves. If I jar with my real self and work against the grain, all is unhappiness. If I work agreeably with my true self, and can really be myself, peace and contentment reign—even in face of the cruellest suffering.

Knowledge of the nature and workings of that Spirit which controls and directs the universe, and of how we ourselves can best work in with it, is then the supremely important knowledge. Fitness to work with it and be at one with it should be the main object of all training. And willingness to work in the same spirit the obviously most sensible attitude to take towards it.

And this knowledge of the inner motive-power

of the world-process is to be obtained not by the bare intellect alone, but only by the whole man—and best of all by the *holy* whole man. It is a matter of mind and heart and will acting together as one, and in their togetherness being most delicately sensitive to the subtlest impressions—being thus sensitive, and yet able also to reject those myriads of useless impressions which give no indication of the real nature of the universe; to select those few which are truly significant; and then from them to make up a convincing picture of the world as it really is.

To the best of our ability let us now adopt this method.

For a thousand million years life has been developing on this planet from the first minute simple specks of protoplasm, scarcely to be distinguished from complex chemical compounds, through more and more highly organised animal forms, till at length man has been reached. The Creative Spirit of the universe has with the one hand, as it were, been creating multitudinous variations, and with the other selecting those which were fittest to survive and carry out the great main purpose of the creative process. And now for one million years man has been developing from his original state of primitive savagery to such civilisation as we have today.

But, unlike the animals from which he has sprung, man has—perhaps always—had a dim consciousness of this Spirit which gave him birth. He has had a sense of dependence on some mighty Power greater far than himself which is constantly affecting his life. In the course of his development through these thousand thousand years this consciousness has been becoming more vivid. And in the last five thousand years there have been instances of fervent spiritual upheavals in the race which have given rise to remarkable spiritual personalities. And these exceptional men have been able to give mankind clearer conceptions of that Spiritual Power upon which they are dependent, and of their relationship to it.

Now some peoples have been more subject than others to these spiritual upheavals and been more prone to bring forth spiritual personalities who have been in a special degree in touch with the Creative Spirit of the universe, as certain microscopic cells within a man become specially in touch with the spirit of man—that is, with the man himself.

Among those peoples specially subject to spiritual upheavals were the Hebrews. And in the course of their history they gave rise to great spiritual personalities, who were to a peculiar degree in touch with the spirit of the universe. And what was noteworthy about the Hebrews

and their prophets was their *forward* outlook. They reached on ahead. They seemed to be possessed of an instinct that the race was developing and had a great future before it. They did not look back to a golden age in the past. They foresaw a golden age in the future. Their prophets foretold the coming of a Messiah who would inaugurate the kingdom of God. Some higher being was to appear who would bring about a better state of things.

In the course of time the one foretold did appear, and the New Testament is a record of his sayings and doings. It is not a precisely accurate record and cannot be taken literally word for word. But, if we take it as a whole and try to grasp its spirit, we are able to see the impression which Jesus made upon his followers. In a sense, they were too near to him to understand him fully and appreciate the experience he had enjoyed. And we, at a juster focal distance, may be able to understand him and see the significance of his experience better than they. But even upon them he was able to produce such an impression that because of it they have influenced the whole course of human history. And we today can see that Jesus at what is known as his baptism by the Holy Ghost reached a higher level of being than the rest of men, and showed to what state mankind in the course of its development might

eventually rise. And it is upon that moment we should concentrate our particular attention.

For in that hushed and sacred moment when he at length found God—when the soul of Jesus and the soul of God first came into that most intimate touch which lovers know when they at last close with one another in complete and utter abandon—in that most solemn and most tender moment man reached and passed a critical point. Man broke with the past and leaped into something new.

In that climax of his history man became aware of the Spirit that moves the world. Of that which so far he had had only dim inklings he was now vividly aware. From his first appearance he had been self-conscious. Unlike the animals, he was conscious of himself. Now he had become *God*-conscious. He had become aware of that spiritual power which was working in him and in all about him—and knew to a certainty that it was good and could be trusted.

Jesus with his genius for what is real, for the essence and spirit of things, for going to the root of the matter and getting at what is fundamental and therefore universal, had been able to capture the very spirit of the universe.

The prophets, indeed, had envisaged foreshadowings of these things. But Jesus had had experience of something far higher than they had

ever conceived. He had felt himself greater than their predicted Messiah—something different and higher. And it was this new quality and consciousness that he now found it so difficult to make even his disciples understand. He tried by parable and preaching to convey to them what he had felt; and to get them to share his momentous experience with him. Yet not even his disciples fully understood him or his experience. It is all the more incumbent upon us of the present day, therefore—and upon men of the future also—to make out for ourselves what is the essential nature of that higher state of soul to which Jesus attained and which he was trying to communicate to mankind that we also might enjoy it.

And if we would discover for ourselves what Jesus felt and what he would have us also feel, we may *commence* by studying what those who lived nearest to him tell of his life and teaching. But we shall have also to combine with their story the experience of holy men of God ever since.

Now from the account the disciples give us in the Gospels we gather that what most impressed them was what he taught of the value of love. Love was the one great commandment. By this should they be known that they were his disciples,

that they had love one to another. The new order of things—the kingdom of God—was to be a kingdom of love.

This was the main impression left upon them. But, besides love, the value of utter sincerity and purity of heart as well as of humility and meekness was also impressed upon them—though this humility went, in the case of Jesus himself, with both a courage and a daring which enabled him to seek out his enemies in the very citadel of their power and defy them to their face, and also an invincible self-confidence—invincible because rooted in the conviction that God was in him, and he in God, and that what he said and did was what God said and did.

Thus the disciples gained from their master an impression of abounding love and life and power, and of a humility inseparably bound up with unshakable self-confidence and dauntless daring.

But over and above what Jesus *taught* his disciples; over and above what he proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount; over and above that love which he so insistently commanded; there must have been some peculiar quality which he never even mentioned and of which even he himself was not aware, but which thus unknown to him must all the time have been emanating from him as the fragrance from a flower. And this subtle quality, like the innocent radiance

from a child, may have been the ultimate secret of his influence—and indeed the ultimate secret of the universe—and the very thing for which we are seeking.

What then, may we surmise, was this fundamental and all-important quality? What was there in the *whole*—in the whole personality and life and teaching of Jesus—which was in none of the parts in isolation? From the experience of those who have come nearest to God in all ages we may conclude that it was a quality for which *holiness* is perhaps the best available term. For it must have been both the summation in one whole and the *surpassing* of all Jesus had taught of love and goodness, of purity and meekness. It must have transcended love and the lovely and pierced the innermost heart of truth. In addition, it must have inspired unbounded awe and wonder. "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God." Awe Jesus inspired as well as wonder at his deeds. He kept men at a distance as well as compellingly attracting them. He spoke with power and imperative authority as well as irresistible charm. Holiness therefore must have been of the essence of his influence. And we may well believe that what was radiating from him all the time was the beauty of holiness. Beauty of holiness it must have been that filled his soul at the baptism of

the Holy Ghost. And the beauty of holiness he must have been trying to convey to his disciples that with it they might build up the kingdom of God. This was, we may imagine, the true cause of his influence. And the sovereign beauty of holiness reigning in the world must have constituted for him the kingdom of God.

The sum impression we gain then from the experience of Jesus as told in the Gospels, and as viewed from the distance of today, is that the world is not sheerly cruel and callous; nor is it ruled by implacable might, blind, cold and indifferent, but is in an organic unity containing within itself dramatic contrasts all dominated by one persistent purpose—the attainment of holiness.

Jesus gave us the highest conception we have of the Power behind things, and thus afforded us the clue to the nature of that Creative Spirit which brought us and all about us into being. And he himself bore most expressly the image of God.

Jesus was not God himself. He never claimed to be. He expressly said: "Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, even God." True he also said: "I and my Father are one." But he taught that we are *all* children of God, that God is our Father; and he said: "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." He

might be in God and God might be in him. But God might be in each one of us and each of us in God. Thus Jesus was not God himself any more than the King of England is England herself. The King is in England and England is in him. But he is not England herself: he is only the supreme representative of England. In the same way, Jesus may justly be regarded not as God himself, but as the supreme representative of God—as the supreme embodiment of the Creative Spirit of the universe. He was that Spirit's highest creation. He was the completest revelation of what is at work in the heart of the world—of what all creation is in travail to bring forth. He was the truest indication we have of what the Mind at the back of the universe is aiming at. When we look on Jesus we can say: God is like that.

Jesus is therefore an example of what man is capable of becoming at his highest. And his experience and his example should fill mankind with *hope*. For millions of years stretch out before the race. And if men work in with the motive power which drives the universe they also may become strong, holy, and God-like as Jesus was. To the heights that he attained they also may attain. They may so train and foster the divine impulses surging up from unplumbable depths within them that when they are touched

by the Holy Fire from above they may quickly catch fire themselves, and so, like Jesus, capture the very spirit of the universe. The God *within* them may be touched by the God *without*. The Holy Ghost may descend upon them and touch the divine spark within them till it flames up and is one with the divine spirit burning in the heart of the world. They may know what true holiness is.

Any one of us—and more and more of us—may thus acquire that same convincing consciousness of God that Jesus had, become aware of the utter reality and realness of God and be sure that he is the one thing truly real behind all forms and appearances, and is verily wanting to help us to be holy as he is holy, perfect as he is perfect, and to create a kingdom of God in which the code of holiness will prevail as naturally as the code of honour now does among honourable men.

And holiness once attained is, like life, bound to perpetuate itself and spread. It has that within it which lures men to it—and lures them to the highest summit of its perfection, though its supreme perfection carries with it an ineffable bliss such as few can endure. It is essentially creative. It cannot rest inactive with unholiness around it. Imperfection it cannot endure. It has a driving necessity within it to make all things like unto it. It must be ever striving to create

love of holiness in others. As those who are imbued with a love of natural beauty are for ever pointing out beauties in nature and trying to get others to see them and share in their enjoyment, so do those who have a love of holiness in their hearts strive to get others to see the beauty of holiness and to share in their own enjoyment of that beauty.

The contagion of holiness will spread. And as the process grows and intensifies each individual will, by sheer inner necessity, be driven to make the whole to which he belongs holy—the family, the nation, the great Nation of nations. And each whole will, by the same necessity, be driven to make every constituent member holy. Now the stress will be on the individual, now on the whole. But each will be driven to make the other more and more holy, for the one could never be completely holy without the other—the whole without the individual member or the separate members without the whole.

How then can the holiness attained by the few best be communicated to the many? The best way of all is that adopted by Jesus—by the living testimony of a life of holiness. And it is mainly by the personality of holy men that holiness has been spread ever since.

But holy men themselves have had to acquire their holiness; and there is a way of communi-

cating the spirit of holiness which was largely used by the Christian Church in mediæval times and which should be effective today. Just as Jesus used the art of the parable to aid him in communicating his ideas and feelings, so has the Church used the art of the drama. And a religious drama written by one burning with the Holy Spirit of God, produced in the hallowed presence of a house of God by actors who are themselves steeped in his Holy Spirit and who are supported by inspired singers and players of divine music, is a means of imparting the spirit of holiness whose value is once again being recognised.

And it so happens that the Christian story is of unsurpassable interest and peculiarly adapted to dramatic presentation. For in the story of Jesus we see unfolded the drama which through the ages is ever being re-enacted of the struggle between that higher self of the universe whom we call God and that lower self of the universe whom we call Satan; between the higher conception of God and the lower; between the spirit and the letter; between heresy and orthodoxy; between the individual and the community; between that freedom for the individual which Jesus won and that integrity of the nation for which the Pharisees contended—and quite rightly contended, for in this respect the Pharisees deserve more commendation than they have received.

So, realising the priceless value of this story, an attempt is here made to present it as a whole in dramatic form. And it is important to present it as a whole and not in sections, as in nativity and passion plays, because it is only out of the whole that the true beauty of holiness will emerge in its fulness. And in this drama the main emphasis has been put on the Baptism of Jesus by the Holy Ghost rather than on the Crucifixion because, as we have already seen, it was in that solemn moment by the Jordan that he touched absolute perfection and was most intimately in touch with the Holy Spirit which animates the world.

And the whole life of Jesus and the life of his time has been treated as an integral part of one universal movement in which mankind, with life in general, is found to be perpetually striving after something higher. For "the kingdom of God" is only a name for the vision all creation has of better things to come; and Jesus must therefore be regarded as the forerunner of that new type of being, that higher race of men, fashioned more and more in the likeness of God, that mankind is in process of creating under the inspiration of the Creative Spirit of the world.

ACT I.—THE HEAVENLY VISION

SCENE I

The first scene is laid in the Temple at Jerusalem. An ordinary Jewish congregation is assembled, seated on the ground, and among them is JESUS, *a child of twelve.*

One of the DOCTORS *standing on the Terrace of the Temple proceedeth to teach the people. He first readeth from the Book:*

"Hear ye the words of the prophet Isaiah. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein; I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

"Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.

"And it shall come to pass in the last day, that the mountains of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall

be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his way, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girth of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

THE DOCTOR *pauseth and repeateth:*

"A little child shall lead them."

He then layeth down the Book, saying:

These are the words of the prophet and we await their fulfilment. We may be careless of

the things of the spirit or we may set our hearts on God. If we turn to God he will teach us of his way, and will plenteously reward us.

A Zealot *riseth and saith:*

For hundreds of years these words have been repeated, but still we await their fulfilment. Our present woes are many. We groan under a foreign yoke. Taxes bear heavy on us. Disease is rife. Our fields are forsaken; our women bereaved; our children orphaned. But the day of consolation is not yet. What evil have we done that the Lord should desert us?

The Doctor *replieth:*

Verily we have tarried long, but the day of accomplishment must surely be nigh when, as the prophet Daniel saith, The Son of Man shall come with the clouds of heaven and be given dominion and glory; and the God of heaven shall set up for him a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed but shall stand for ever.

The Zealot, *protesting, saith:*

Yea, we have indeed tarried long. Wherefore should we tarry longer? Doth not the prophet Isaiah say, The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man and stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. Why rise we not against our rulers and destroy the rich? Thus may we save our nation

and hasten the coming of the kingdom of God. The Messiah will be a warrior Messiah and with him to lead us and with arms in our hands we will shake off the yoke of the Romans. We will have no master but God. And the law of Moses shall be established in the whole world.

A Priest *saith:*

Truly the law of Moses shall be established in the whole world. But the Messiah will be no warrior as thou supposeth. He will be a priestly ruler. He will make Jerusalem the glory of all nations. The treasury in the Temple will overflow. Crowds will come hither to worship. Tithes will be more abundant. And the whole world will acknowledge that the God of Israel is the one and only God. What sayest thou, Doctor?

The Doctor *replieth:*

Who am I to say whether the Messiah will be a warrior or a priestly ruler? All we know is that the prophet Daniel saith, The Son of Man shall come with the clouds of heaven and be given dominion and glory; and the God of heaven shall set up for him a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, but shall stand firm for ever.

The Child Jesus *clappeth his hands for joy and exclaimeth:*

How glorious! He will be like unto the angels

—all shining white, and he will establish the kingdom of God!

THE DOCTOR *saith:*

Yea, he will make an end of all pain and sorrow. He will work great marvels and redeem our people from every misfortune. He will restore Israel to more than its ancient power. All the people of the earth shall come to Jerusalem to worship the Holy One of Israel. And in that great day men shall shout the glad tidings from the top of the mountains and give glory to God. The kingdom of heaven will have come. And everlasting joy shall be upon our heads.

THE CHILD JESUS, *his heart overflowing with delight, exclaimeth:*

That day must surely be nigh, O Doctor? It cannot be far.

THE DOCTOR *replieth:*

Truly it would come at once if only men would repent. But whence art thou, my child? And how is it that thou hearkenest so eagerly unto these things?

THE CHILD JESUS *answereth and saith unto him:*

I am from Nazareth in Galilee and must shortly return thither. But fain would I live here always. For the very ground seemeth to me holy. And when I listen unto thy words my soul soareth as

the lark to heights where only angels dwell, and I would sing to the glory of God all the day long.

THE DOCTOR *urgeth him, saying:*

Then why not remain here, my child, and live for ever in the presence of God?

THE CHILD JESUS *replieth:*

That indeed would be my heart's desire. But not yet can I fulfil it. I must return from hither unto my home where my parents need me.

As he is thus speaking, the parents of JESUS *come into the Temple, and when they see him sitting in the midst of the* DOCTORS, *both hearing them and asking them questions, they are amazed, and his* MOTHER *saith unto him:*

Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

JESUS *saith unto them:*

How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

JESUS *then turneth unto* THE DOCTOR *and saith:*

I must get me to my home now. But I will cease not to remember thy words. And whensoever I may I will return unto Jerusalem and be with thee again in this most sacred place.

JOSEPH *and* MARY *and* THE CHILD JESUS *depart unto Galilee.*

SCENE II

The second scene is set in the wilderness by the Jordan south of Jericho. There are present JAMES *and* JOHN (*the sons of* ZEBEDEE), JEHUDAH (*a Pharisee from Jerusalem*), MACAIAH (*a disciple of* JOHN THE BAPTIST), *and others.*

JAMES, *looking down the road leading towards Jerusalem, saith:*

In these days come many unto the Baptist from Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan to be baptised of him that they may be cleansed of their sins. But they who have most need of repentance, come not.

JEHUDAH *asketh:*

Of whom speakest thou?

JAMES *replieth:*

Of those high priests who wax fat from the sale of animals for their sacrifices while they place a heavy burden on men by multiplying the ceremonies they have to observe.

JOHN *addeth:*

And their servants also who, under the cloak of their masters' authority, add to our burdens.

MACAIAH, *joining in, asketh:*

And the doctors—care they for aught but the letter of the law? Care they one jot or tittle for true holiness of heart?

JEHUDAH, *full of wrath, demandeth:*

What know ye, O men of Galilee, about the law? Ye are but ignorant fools. It is ye that are sinners and in need of repentance. Unless all know the law and obey it the nation perisheth. First learn the law and then be baptised if ye will.

JESUS (*now thirty years of age*) *entereth, and, joining the group, saith:*

Truly men must obey the law of God. Unless the law of God is our delight we shall perish in our afflictions. Unless a man layeth one brick straight on another the house falleth. But a builder thinketh more of the house that he buildeth than of the laws by which he buildeth it. Even so must we think more of God than of the laws by which we may find him.

JOHN *saith:*

Verily this is so. But to obey the law is difficult when dwelling in the world. Let us therefore live apart by ourselves.

An ESSENE, *turning eagerly to* JOHN *and* JESUS, *saith:*

Come then and join us. We have given up all our possessions and dwell by ourselves apart from

the world. No man is a servant among us, and none is regarded as above his neighbour. We labour with our hands and have all things in common.

JOHN *saith:*

Thus I have heard, and men say that ye live together in all sobriety. What sayest thou, Jesus of Nazareth? Shall we not join ourselves with them and lead the pure and holy lives that they live?

JESUS *replieth:*

Almost thou persuadest me to join them, for they live nigh to God. But I would not live apart from men. I love to be among my fellows. And better days may be at hand. In every town and village are humble men of heart who serve God with all their souls and look for the near coming of the Messiah. And I would live with them rather than apart.

MACAIAH *saith:*

But they must repent of their sins, as John the Baptist saith, or the Messiah will not come. John prepareth the way for the Messiah. For the word of God is on him. Only evil angereth him. And he feareth none, but rebuketh the highest. Follow ye him.

JESUS *saith:*

Verily he is true of heart and like unto the

prophets of old. Therefore am I come from Nazareth to hearken unto his words and be baptised of him in Jordan.

MACAIAH *saith:*

He is a holy man indeed. He eateth not meat, neither drinketh he wine; he liveth only on locusts and wild honey. And he hath gone out into all the country about Jordan preaching the baptism for the remission of sins; and the people receive him gladly.

JOHN, *recalling the old prophecies, saith:*

May be they remember the words of the prophet Malachi: "Behold I shall send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me. And I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of our Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

MACAIAH, *agreeing, saith:*

We disciples of John believe that he is Elijah himself who went to heaven and never saw death. The Messiah surely cometh. But Elijah must come before him to prepare the way. This is nigh the very place where Elijah was wont to conceal himself. And John weareth camel's hair like a prophet and a leathern girdle like Elijah.

Who can say but that he is Elijah come to earth again. He feareth no man. He hath rebuked even Herod for marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. In this also is he like unto the prophets of old.

JOSES (*another disciple of* JOHN) *saith:*

Who else but a prophet would dare defy Herod? Verily this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

JOHN THE BAPTIST *approacheth, saying to all those gathered together:*

Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

MANY *shout:*

We repent. Baptise us therefore that our sins may be remitted.

But JOHN, *when he seeth* JEHUDAH *and many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, saith unto them:*

O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

JEHUDAH *saith:*

We are of the seed of Abraham : and Abraham our father will plead for us in the day of judgment.

JOHN *saith:*

Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father : for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

The PEOPLE *ask him, saying:*

What shall we do then?

HE *answereth and saith unto them:*

He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none : and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

Then came also the publicans to be baptised, and say unto him:

Master, what shall we do?

And HE *saith unto them:*

Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

And the SOLDIERS *likewise demand of him, saying:*

And what shall we do?

And He *saith unto them:*

Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely: and be content with your wages.

John *then looketh upon the people, and, seeing their expectation, saith:*

Ye muse in your hearts whether I be the Christ, or not. I indeed baptise you with water: but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

After that he had thus spoken, the people gather round John *to be baptised. And he baptiseth them all, saying:*

I baptise you for the remission of sins.

Macaiah *saith:*

Of a surety this John is Elijah come to earth again. And now that we have repented of our sins and been baptised our sins will be forgiven.

Joses *saith:*

Yea, and now that Elijah hath come and men are repenting themselves of their sins, the Messiah himself will soon appear. Then the kingdom of heaven will come to pass, and there will be no more toil and sorrow.

JOHN THE BAPTIST *and all the multitude depart, leaving* JESUS *still praying after his baptism. He prayeth long, and, throwing up his arms to heaven, crieth:*

The words of John have kindled a strange flame in my heart. My spirit stirreth within me. And my soul streameth after thee, the living God. Come thou unto me, O God. Come thou unto me. Come unto me.

And behold as he prayeth the Holy Ghost descendeth in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice cometh from heaven which saith:

Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. This day have I begotten thee, and in thee shall I be blessed.

JESUS *boweth down and remaineth deep in prayer, a holy peace upon him, and saith:*

Long have I thirsted for thee, the most highest, over all the earth. All my days hath my heart panted for thee. And now from the very ground of my heart I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast granted me my heart's desire and hast revealed thyself unto me till I know thee in thy most inward parts.

As I have loved thee, so now dost thou, O God most holy, love me. Thou hast shown forth the light of thy countenance upon me, and I have beheld the fair beauty of thy face. Oh, how plentiful

is thy goodness, how perfect is the beauty of thy holiness, how wonderful is thy doing toward the children of men! My heart danceth for joy. The joy of angels is mine. And who can withstand the power of thy love? There is sprung up a light for the righteous and a joyful gladness for such as are true of heart.

Thou hast spoken in thy holiness, and I will alway give thanks unto thee with my whole heart for a remembrance of thy holiness. I will show the voice of thanksgiving and tell of the wonders of thy love. But who can express thy noble acts or show forth all thy praise? Oh, quicken me after thy loving-kindness! And through thee will I do great acts and sing of thy glory and honour all the day long. All the world shall worship thee. All the ends of the world shall fear thee.

Oh, that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men. Holy and reverend is his name.

JESUS *riseth and communeth with his own heart and saith:*

God hath revealed himself unto me as he hath showed himself unto no man yet. Yea, not even the prophets hath he drawn so nigh unto him. As living water hath he poured his Holy Spirit into my soul. I am flooded with his love till I am cleansed in my inmost parts. He is all might,

majesty and dominion. And he is all wisdom and all beauty and all goodness. But before all is he Holiest Love. Of his Almighty Love am I begotten. Of his Holy Love am I made. And to his love will I ever turn my heart. He is my Father. All men are his children. And, like a Father, he is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering and of great goodness.

And his Holy Spirit hath descended on me and awakened the soul within me, so that darkness hath become light. Mine eyes were blind; now I see glories untellable. I was deaf; now I hear the merest whispers of angels. I was dumb; now I pour out my soul in one rapturous song of delight. Before, I walked on the ground; now I soar on the wings of the morning. A new and wondrous life is mine—immense as the heavens, glorious as the rising sun, fervent as fire, swift as the flight of an eagle. And power is mine to remove mountains.

Now indeed I live. In me is the life of God himself. Into me hath he deigned to enter. And for evermore I live in him as he liveth in me. Now have I the power to bind men together and create a true kingdom of God in their hearts. No other power than Holiest Love can do this. But what that power is God hath now revealed unto me. With it he hath endowed me. And great is the revelation.

JESUS *kneeleth a second time and prayeth:*

O Lord, my heart melteth in thy presence. My soul runneth like water before thee. Thy love is as a fiery furnace within me. Yea, as a fire which burneth but consumeth not. Thy glorious majesty is upon me. I breathe the air of heaven. On the wings of thy love am I borne higher than the heavens and further than the East is from the West. Oh, the joy of my soul! Pure as the sky at dawn is the holiness of thy love. Fresh as waters from a spring are the words my soul singeth unto thee.

I have kept innocence and taken heed to the thing that is right. I beseech thee, let thy grace for ever abound in my heart. Continue forth thy loving-kindness, O Lord, and show thy holiness unto all that are true of heart that they may delight in thee and sing praises unto thy name.

JESUS *riseth and again searcheth out his spirit, saying:*

With this light that is now in me I must lighten all men. I must open their eyes and quicken their hearts till they are filled with love and their eyes beam with gladness, and they clap their hands together and sing unto God with the voice of melody. I am possessed with the Spirit of God, and I will breathe his spirit into men and tell them of a kingdom of God which surpasseth their

furthest imaginings as far as the glory of the sun exceedeth the brightness of the moon.

But how shall I make them see it? To me it is clear as the light. But their eyes are still dim through much care for things that matter little. I have glad tidings to tell. But have they the ears to hear it? Does not the din of mammon stop their hearing?

Shall I go up into Jerusalem and proclaim the good news there? Shall I tell it to them that sit in the seats of the mighty? Shall I tell it to the doctors? Shall I go up unto the Temple and proclaim it from the pinnacles thereof? Or shall I go to Nazareth and speak it privily to mine own people?

None of these things will I do. The hearts of the mighty are hardened by the pomps of power. The doctors are stiff-necked with much learning. And in mine own house they would scoff at me and do me evil. Neither will I shout the good news from the house-tops; nor will I speak it in the ear of my brethren. But I will go unto Capernaum where dwell men I know whose heart is whole with God and in whose dwelling is the voice of joy and health. Unto them will I speak so that my joy may remain in them and that their joy may be full. We will take sweet counsel together. And through them I will spread to all Israel the glad tidings that the kingdom of God

is at hand and all sins will be redeemed and all sorrows washed away. Then may men sing with joyfulness and praise God in his holiness.

JESUS *kneeleth a third time and prayeth:*

O Father, be thou ever with me. In thee do I put my trust. My heart is in thy ways. Thou art the strength of my life and I fear not what man shall do unto me. Be thou my stronghold whereunto I can alway resort. Teach me thy will, O God, that I may understand it and do it. Sustain me and lead me in thy holiness that I may give thee thanks in the great congregation and praise thee among much people.

ACT II.—THE SPREADING LIGHT

SCENE I

The first scene is set in the synagogue at Capernaum. At the south end facing the north is set the movable "Ark," or chest, containing the rolls of the Law and of the Prophets. In front of the Ark hangeth a curtain, and before the curtain hangeth the Holy Lamp whose light is ever kept burning. In the middle of the synagogue is a raised platform and on it is set a chair, or throne, and a reading desk. At one end is the women's gallery.

The people begin to assemble—traders, fishermen, cultivators, artisans, women and children. The elders and officials of the synagogue take their places in the seats reserved for the rulers of the synagogue and for the honourable, and situated right before the Ark, facing the people.

With the people as they assemble there entereth JESUS, *his whole countenance shining as the sun, a great gladness in his mouth, and his words full of joy. With him are* JAMES *and* JOHN (*the sons of* ZEBEDEE), PETER *and his brother* ANDREW. JESUS *saith:*

Now will I make you, O James and John, fishers of men, as I promised unto Peter and Andrew when, at my call, they straightway left their nets and followed me.

By the Jordan they tried to persuade me to dwell apart from men. But I refused, saying: I love men and must live among them. Now I have glad tidings of great joy to tell, and ye must be with me to bring men unto me that they may hear and understand.

JOHN *exclaimeth:*

My heart cleaveth unto thee as the girdle cleaveth to the loins. It desireth nothing more than to remain with thee always.

THEY ALL *exclaim together:*

We will be with thee always.

JAMES *addeth:*

But we must beware of Herod the king, since it is he that put John in prison for rebuking him for unlawfully marrying Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

JOHN *saith:*

It seemeth me that Herod used John's rebuke only as an excuse for imprisoning him. In his heart he feareth John lest he should stir up a rebellion against him. Herod knoweth that we Galileans expect the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and look upon John as Elijah, and there-

fore as the forerunner of the Messiah. The Zealots preach that the kingdom of heaven must be won by force. And Herod may fear that they make John their leader and try to dethrone him. It is fear, not anger at his rebuke, that caused him to imprison John. So it seemeth me.

JESUS *saith:*

Yea, but for us he need have no fear for he will see that we desire not to stir up rebellion, but only to turn men to God. Therefore we need not beware of Herod. But I say unto you, beware ye the Pharisees. They will be our enemies. A man's enemies are they of his own household. And I see here in the synagogue one Simon who loveth the letter but despiseth the spirit. His ears will be deaf to the glad tidings I bring men, and he will strive to turn men from me. Of him beware.

As JESUS *thus speaketh to his disciples, the ruler of the synagogue cometh to him and inviteth him for that Sabbath to act as the spokesman of the congregation.* JESUS *then ascendeth the steps to the chair to take his place as leader of the congregation for the day. Standing by the desk, he beginneth the service by offering prayer:*

O God, our Father, may the joy which hath come to me come also in full measure to all here present today. May thy Holy Spirit ever sustain

us that we may walk in thy ways. Show forth unto us the light of thy countenance, and may thy love remain in our hearts, we beseech thee, O God.

Then followeth the Shema, uttered by all the congregation in unison:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

The MINISTER *then approacheth the Ark and bringeth forth from it the case containing the roll of the Prophets, and, after unwinding the cloth in which it is bound, handeth it to* JESUS. *And* JESUS, *standing, readeth from the Book:*

"The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: for they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you.

"And how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth."

JESUS *layeth down the book, sitteth in the chair, and, looking round upon them, saith:*

Our God reigneth. The time is fulfilled and

the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the Gospel. Believe the good tidings I now bring you. What Esaias prophesied that now cometh to pass. The reign of God is at hand. No man yet seeth it. For the kingdom of God is within you and groweth up within you. It is like a grain of mustard seed which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth; but when it is sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all the herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. Or it is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. Even so and now is the kingdom of God working in you as the leaven, and growing up in you like the grain of mustard seed.

God himself is bringing it to pass as he bringeth the mustard seed to growth. This is my good news. Blessed be ye that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God at hand. Rejoice and be glad.

SIMON THE PHARISEE *saith to his neighbour:*

What new doctrine is this? I am astonished at it. Even John the Baptist never said that the prophecies were fulfilled. Who is this Jesus, to say more than John?

JESUS, *continuing, saith:*

It may be new, but it is of God. Therefore

come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

And I say unto you that whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Therefore, Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Seek ye then the kingdom of God. Have faith and it will come even as beauty cometh to the flowers. For consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Their beauty no man can equal, and yet it cometh to them by no effort of their own. It cometh to them from God. Have faith then that if God giveth such beauty

to the flowers he will give far greater glory unto you. Ask, believing, and the glory shall be yours.

As JESUS *concludeth his discourse and descendeth from the platform, a* MEMBER *of the congregation crieth:*

Verily, he speaketh as one with authority and not as the scribes. They simply quote from the Book. But this man speaketh on his own authority. His word is with power.

While the congregation breaketh up a MAN *which had a spirit of an unclean devil crieth out with a loud voice:*

Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy one of God.

But JESUS, *rebuking him, saith:*

Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

And when the devil had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he cometh out of him.

ALL *are amazed and say:*

What thing is this? For with authority he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

And the CHILDREN *cry out, saying:*

Hosanna. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.

But the scribes and Pharisees are sore displeased, and SIMON *saith unto* JESUS:

Hearest thou what they say?

JESUS *saith unto them:*

Yea; I hear them: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

While they are listening to the words of JESUS, MARY MAGDALENE, *bringing an alabaster box of ointment, standing at* JESUS' *feet behind him, weeping, beginneth to wash his feet, anointing them with the ointment.*

SIMON THE PHARISEE *saith to his neighbour:*

This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

JESUS, *answering, saith unto him:*

Simon, I have something to say unto thee.

SIMON *saith:*

Master, say on.

JESUS *saith:*

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most?

SIMON *answereth and saith:*
I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most.
JESUS *saith unto him:*
Thou hast rightly judged.

JESUS, *then turning to the woman, saith:*
Simon, seest thou this woman. Thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto you, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

JESUS, *addressing the woman, saith:*
Thy sins are forgiven.

THEY THAT STAND BY *exclaim:*
Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

JESUS *saith to the woman:*
Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

MARY MAGDALENE, *after bowing and kissing his feet, saith:*
I go now as thou commandest, but through all my life will I worship thee.
She then departeth.

JESUS, *turning unto his disciples, saith:*

I have shown the people of Capernaum what faith may do and how near is the kingdom of heaven. Now let us go into the next town, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

They all depart.

SCENE II

The second scene is laid on the mountain-side. There are present certain disciples whom JESUS *hath chosen to follow him and learn of him what manner of kingdom is the kingdom of God, and afterwards to spread abroad the good tidings of its coming. The names of the disciples are these:* SIMON (*whom he also named* PETER) *and* ANDREW *his brother,* PHILIP *and* BARTHOLOMEW, MATTHEW *and* THOMAS, JAMES *the son of* ALPHÆUS, *and* SIMON ZELOTES; *and* JUDAS *the brother of* JAMES, *and* JUDAS ISCARIOT. *And many others follow with the disciples.*

As these are coming together on the mountain SIMON PETER *saith to* MATTHEW:

How is it that thou comest to be following Jesus of Nazareth?

MATTHEW, *answering, saith:*

As I was sitting at the receipt of custom Jesus passed by and, seeing me, saith unto me, "Follow me." And I arose and followed him. I had heard him speak in the synagogue and I knew the wonders which he had performed. And when

he made the call unto me, how could I refuse to obey?

I asked him into my house. And it came to pass that as Jesus sat at meat in my house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, "Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners?" But when Jesus heard that he said unto them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth. I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Hearing these words, SIMON PETER *saith:*

Yea indeed, Jesus mindeth not with whom he sitteth at meat. Nor doth he bid us to fast, or to withdraw into the desert to live apart from men. He loveth to go in and out among the people. He joineth in the marriage feasts. And at Cana of Galilee when there was no more wine he turned the water into wine. And the governor of the feast said unto the bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." This is the miracle that Jesus did. He would make men happy. He is not stern and austere like John the Baptist. He loveth to be

among the people, rejoicing with them that do rejoice and mourning with them that mourn. And the people now so clamour after him that we have no leisure so much as to eat. Oft have we to get into some boat and put off from the shore or depart into some desert spot where we can sit down and rest awhile. But follow our Master we will anywhere.

Even as SIMON PETER *is speaking,* JESUS *appeareth with* JAMES *and* JOHN (*the sons of* ZEBEDEE), *and the people press towards him, bringing unto him all sick people that are taken with diverse diseases and torments, and those that are possessed with devils and those that have the palsy. And they seek to touch him; for there goeth virtue out of him. And behold a* WOMAN *which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, cometh behind him, saying within herself:*

I am stricken with illness these last twelve years. I have suffered many things of many physicians and have spent all that I have, and I am nothing better, but rather grow worse. But if I may but touch his garment I shall be whole.

She toucheth the hem of his garment, and straightway the fountain of her blood is dried up; and she feeleth in her body that she is healed of that plague. And JESUS, *immediately knowing in*

himself that virtue hath gone out of him, turneth him about in the press, and saith:

Who touched my garment?

And his DISCIPLES *say unto him:*

Thou seest the multitude thronging thee and sayest thou, "Who touched me?"

But HE *looketh round about to see her that hath done this thing. And the* WOMAN, *fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, cometh and falleth down before him and saith:*

I indeed, Lord, did touch the hem of thy garment. For I have been ill these twelve years of an issue of blood. And I said within myself, If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole.

And JESUS *saith unto her:*

Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

The WOMAN *boweth to the ground and kisseth his feet and saith:*

Lord, thou hast made me whole. With all my heart I thank thee.

And behold there also cometh a LEPER *and worshippeth him, saying:*

Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.

Then JESUS *putteth forth his hand and toucheth him, saying:*

I will; be thou clean.

And immediately his leprosy is cleansed and he exclaimeth:

Lord, I am cleansed.

JESUS *saith unto him:*

See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for testimony unto them.

Then THEY *bring to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed, and say unto* JESUS:

Lord, make this man whole also.

And JESUS, *seeing their faith, saith unto the sick of the palsy:*

Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

Hearing this, SIMON THE PHARISEE *saith to himself:*

This man blasphemeth.

But JESUS, *knowing his thoughts, saith:*

Wherefore thinkest thou evil in thine heart? For whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house.

Whereupon the sick man ariseth and goeth to his house.

The MULTITUDE *marvelleth and shouteth:*

Glory to God, which hath given such power unto men.

JESUS *then taketh his* DISCIPLES *apart and openeth his mouth and teacheth them, saying:*

Think not over much on these wonders that ye see. They matter not greatly. Nor think ye that a man's life consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. The men of riches and power are not to be envied. But—

Blessed are the poor in spirit : for *their's* is the kingdom of heaven ;

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted ;

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth ;

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled ;

Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy ;

Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God ;

Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God ;

Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for their's is the kingdom of heaven ;

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

Here NATHAN, *a Pharisee, interrupteth and asketh:*

Which is the first commandment of all?

And JESUS *answereth him:*

The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And NATHAN *saith unto him:*

Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for

there is one God: and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when JESUS *saw that he answered discreetly,* HE *saith unto him:*

Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

A SCRIBE *asketh* JESUS:

And who is my neighbour?

JESUS, *answering, saith:*

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him:

"Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among thieves?

THE SCRIBE, *answering, saith:*
He that showed mercy on him.

Then said JESUS:
Go, and do thou likewise.

Turning again to his disciples, JESUS *saith:*
All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. For if ye love them

which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

A DISCIPLE *exclaimeth:*

This is a hard saying. How can we be perfect?

JESUS *answereth and saith:*

Pray without ceasing.

THE DISCIPLE *saith:*

Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples.

And JESUS *saith unto them:*

When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

All the DISCIPLES *together say:*

Even so, Lord, will we pray.

And JESUS, *continuing, saith:*

And having prayed, take heed of your inmost thoughts. Ye have heard that it was said by men of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery ; but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery

with her already in his heart. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement : but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery : and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

I say also that if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

And lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal : for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

And take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The DISCIPLES *together exclaim:*
Yea, Lord, the kingdom of God will we seek.

Then cometh to him the MOTHER *of* JAMES *and* JOHN, *worshipping him and saying:*
Lord, grant me a favour.

JESUS *saith unto her:*
What wilt thou?

SHE *saith unto him:*
Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left in thy kingdom.

But JESUS, *answering, saith unto her sons:*
Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?

JAMES *and* JOHN *say:*
We are able.

HE *saith unto them:*
Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with; but to sit on my right hand and my left is not mine to give, but it is given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

The other TEN DISCIPLES *are moved into indignation against* JAMES *and* JOHN, *and say:*
What right have ye to set yourselves above us?

But JESUS *saith:*

Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over the people, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Then are brought unto him little children that he should put his hands on them and pray; but the DISCIPLES *rebuketh them. But* JESUS *saith:*

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.

JESUS *then calleth a little child unto him, and setteth him in the midst of them, and saith:*

Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about

his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

JESUS *then taketh the little child in his arms, putteth his hands upon him, and blesseth him, saying:*

Of such is the kingdom of God.

SCENE III

The third scene is set in a synagogue. JESUS *is seated, teaching the people.*

SIMON PETER *beginneth to speak unto him:*
Good Master——

JESUS, *interrupting him, saith:*
Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. And some there are who think me evil. I have many enemies.

Then saith SIMON PETER:
This may be so among the Pharisees. But among the people there hath come a great fear: and they glorify God, saying, That a great prophet is risen among us; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumour of theirs hath gone forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

At this moment there entereth MACAIAH *and* JOSES, *two disciples of* JOHN THE BAPTIST, *who say unto* JESUS:
We have showed our Master in prison all these things that thou doest and he hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

JESUS, *answering, saith unto them:*

Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who should not be offended in me.

The messengers of JOHN *depart, and* JESUS *beginneth to speak unto the people concerning* JOHN:

What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind—a man swayed this way and that by any chance word? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." And I say unto you, Among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. But this, too, I say unto you—and mark ye it. He that is *least* in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Then came to him other DISCIPLES *of* JOHN, *saying:*

Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

JESUS *saith unto them:*

Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them and then shall they fast. Now is no time for mourning. The kingdom of God is at hand. These are days for rejoicing. I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly.

SIMON THE PHARISEE *with others also cometh to him, saying:*

Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath, for they go through the cornfields plucking the ears of corn to eat.

JESUS *saith unto* JOHN:

How is it that these fools look only on the ground and are blind to the glory which now breaketh in the heavens. What mattereth the way when the city is before us?

Then HE *answereth* SIMON, *saying:*

Have ye not heard what David did, when he had need and was an hungered, he and they that were with him, how he went into the house of God, and did eat the shew bread which is not lawful to eat, but only for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him? The Sabbath

was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

PETER *exclaimeth:*

Verily this is so. The Master speaketh the truth; hear ye him.

But the Pharisees are filled with madness and commune with one another how they may convict him. And SIMON *saith:*

We Pharisees keep the commandments of Moses. We abide by the ancient law. And we shall receive our reward. But these breakers of the Sabbath and those who eat with publicans and sinners shall be convicted of their transgressions and be made to suffer.

JESUS, *hearing these words, speaketh this parable unto them:*

Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

And take heed ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

And Jesus *sitteth over against the treasury, and beholdeth how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much. And there cometh a certain poor widow, and she throweth in two mites, which make a farthing. And* He *calleth his* Disciples *and saith unto them:*

Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

SIMON, *with some scribes and Pharisees, then bring unto* JESUS *a* WOMAN *taken in adultery, and, when they have set her in the midst,* SIMON *saith unto him:*

Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

SIMON THE PHARISEE *saith aside to another:*

If he answereth that not rightly we will accuse him.

JESUS *stoopeth down and with his finger writeth on the ground as though he heareth them not.*

Then SIMON *again asketh him:*

What sayest thou? We pray thee answer.

JESUS *lifteth himself up and saith unto them:*

He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

JESUS *again stoopeth and writeth on the ground.*

They which hear it, being convicted of their own conscience, go out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and JESUS *is left alone, and the* WOMAN *standing in the midst.*

JESUS *once more lifteth up himself, and, when* HE *seeth none but the* WOMAN, *saith unto her:*

Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?

She *saith:*

No man, Lord.

Jesus *saith unto her:*

Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

The Woman *departeth.*

The Disciples *return, and there also come to* Jesus Jehudah *with scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem, saying:*

Why do thy disciples trangress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. We Pharisees and all the Jews, except we wash our hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

Jesus, *answering, saith unto them:*

Why do ye also trangress the commandment of God by your tradition? Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and he that curseth his father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, Whatever of mine which might have

been of service to you is now given to God, that man is no way bound to honour his father or his mother. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Why then should men hold to your tradition?

Ye talk of the tradition of the elders. But I bring something new. And no man putteth a piece of new cloth on to an old garment; for that which is thus put on to fill it up taketh from the garment and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break and the wine runneth out and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles and both are preserved. Even so do I put new doctrines into new men.

And behold, there was in the synagogue a man which had his hand withered. And JEHUDAH THE PHARISEE *saith to another Pharisee:*

We will watch Jesus whether he will heal him on the Sabbath Day, for if he do we will accuse him of breaking the Sabbath.

And JEHUDAH *asketh* JESUS, *saying:*

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day?

And JESUS *saith unto him:*

What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath Day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a

sheep. Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath Day.

Then saith He *to the man:*

Stretch forth thine hand.

And it is restored whole as the other. And the Man, *kneeling and bowing before* Jesus, *saith:*

Thanks be to God: my arm is whole even as the other.

Jesus *blesseth him: and* He *and his* Disciples *and the man with the withered hand rise. As they begin to depart the* Disciples *say unto him privily:*

Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard these sayings of thine and saw what thou didst?

But He *answereth and saith unto them:*

Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.

The Disciples *say:*

Yea, we will leave them alone, and we will sit and watch Jehudah leading his followers into the ditch and all falling in together.

Jesus *saith:*

I understand not these people. Whereunto shall I liken them? They are like unto children

sitting in the market-place and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; We have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and men say, He hath a devil. Then the Son of man cometh eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

The DISCIPLES *exclaim:*

Who indeed will satisfy them? John's yoke was too hard and thine is too easy. They are a stiff-necked generation.

Turning to the Pharisees, JESUS *saith:*

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou

say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

JESUS *and his* DISCIPLES *depart.* JEHUDAH THE PHARISEE, *remaining behind, saith to the Pharisee* NATHAN:

This Jesus is a sore offence unto me. Where was the need for healing the man with a withered hand on the Sabbath? Why not have waited till the morrow? His disease was of long-standing. There was no call for haste. Without cause this Jesus hath broken the Sabbath. And to break the Sabbath is a crime worthy of death.

We are the chosen people of God, and must see to it that the religion of our fathers is scrupulously observed. This man setteth at naught the laws of Moses and the tradition of the elders. He maketh each man a law unto himself. And he may incite the people against the authorities. We must take counsel with the Herodians how he may be destroyed.

NATHAN, *answering him, saith:*

Wait awhile. What need is there of such violence? Doth not the Master Hillel say, What is hateful to thyself do not unto thy neighbour. This Jesus doth not teach men to hate or be

violent, or to seek after power. He telleth them to sell all they have and give to the poor. And he exhorteth them to obey the great commandments—to love God and love their neighbour as themselves. He doeth no harm.

JEHUDAH *replieth:*

Truly he giveth gentle counsel to the people. Yet he leadeth them away from the tradition of the elders by breaking the Sabbath and permitting his disciples to eat with unwashen hands and by sitting down to meat with publicans and sinners. He maketh no difference between the clean and the unclean. And he is a blasphemer. Hast thou not heard about the man sick of the palsy?

NATHAN *replieth:*

What story is this? and in what way did Jesus blaspheme?

JEHUDAH *saith:*

It was noised abroad that he was in a house in Capernaum. And straightway many were gathered together insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they came unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was; and, when they had broken it up, let down the bed

wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

I ask thee, Nathan, did not this man speak blasphemy in telling the sick of the palsy his sins were forgiven?

NATHAN *replieth:*

Sufferings cleanse a man from all sins.

JEHUDAH *saith:*

So the saying is of old. But it is God alone, not this man, that forgiveth sin. He is guilty of blasphemy as well as of breaking the tradition of the elders. He causeth great trouble. He speaketh of new wine and he meaneth new ways. He would cast aside the old to make way for the new. He is a danger to our nation. Our nation is small. We are surrounded by enemies. We must destroy anyone who would break us asunder. And we must preserve every law and tradition that keepeth us together. I will go to the Herodians. Herod the King will imprison him as he hath imprisoned John the Baptist.

They depart.

ACT III.—SHADOWS

SCENE I

The first scene is laid in the synagogue of Nazareth. People of the town are assembling. A MAN FROM CAPERNAUM *arriveth and saith:*

I am straightway come from Capernaum and have witnessed the wonders which Jesus of this town doeth. Doeth he wonders here also?

A NAZARENE *replieth:*

Here at Nazareth he can do no mighty work save lay his hands on a few sick folk and heal them. Ye of Capernaum know him not as we know him. We have seen him all our lives. What new thing can he do?

The MAN FROM CAPERNAUM *continueth:*

He may do little here. But in all the villages and towns round about Capernaum the people marvel at the wonders that he doeth. They say a new prophet is arisen. Multitudes follow after him whithersoever he goeth. Often they press after him so that he hath to take boat and from there preach to the multitude. And he healeth all manner of sickness. They say he hath even raised one from the dead.

The NAZARENE *is astonished and saith:*

If he can raise one from the dead he must surely be a prophet. But tell us what doth he prophesy.

The MAN FROM CAPERNAUM *answereth:*

He prophesieth that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But the kingdom is not for the proud and the mighty. It is for the lowly and humble. And the kingdom will grow up gradually like a mustard seed, which is so small men can scarce see it, but which in time groweth up into a great tree.

The NAZARENE *protesteth:*

It is not thus that we have believed the kingdom of heaven to be. We have been told that the kingdom of God would come with the sound of a trumpet, and that the saints of the Most High would set up a mighty kingdom under the righteous sceptre of the Messiah and rule the whole earth.

The MAN FROM CAPERNAUM *replieth:*

Jesus telleth of no such kingdom. The kingdom that he speaketh of is the kingdom of good, the kingdom of the spirit. The meek shall inherit the earth, he saith.

SIMON THE PHARISEE, *joining the group, saith:*

This Jesus may talk of meekness. But he speaketh strong words against those that are not with him. And he hath a biting tongue, and by it he hath aroused the fierce anger of the Pharisees.

For he holdeth us up to scorn before the people and heapeth indignity upon us.

JESUS *entereth the synagogue with some friends, his brethren, and his disciples.* ONE OF HIS FRIENDS *saith to* JESUS :

We have been much troubled about thee insomuch that we went to seize thee, but were not able to because of the press of the people.

JESUS *asketh them:*

Wherefore should ye want to seize me? What do I that ye should be thus fearful of heart?

The FRIEND *replieth:*

Thou hast made thyself stink with the Pharisees. By calling them fools and hypocrites and accusing them of making clean the outside of the cup and platter while the inward part is full of ravening wickedness, thou hast aroused their bitter anger. Trouble may befall thee, and we would save thee from their wrath.

JESUS *asketh:*

Wouldst thou have it then that I should refrain my tongue when I see evil before me?

The FRIEND *replieth:*

Thou shouldst leave the restraint of evil to those whose business it is. By offending the Pharisees thou hast caused them to turn the people against thee. The people know that the scribes and Pharisees are learned whilst thou art only the son

of a carpenter, and they question why they should follow thee rather than those who are well versed in the law. We beg thee, therefore, to make an end of preaching and turn again to thine own business here in thine own home.

His BRETHREN *likewise urge* JESUS, *saying:*

We also entreat thee return to thine own home. We need thy support for our mother. And thy mother, and we, too, went to thee on the mountain, but could not get near thee. But now that thou art returned to Nazareth, we pray thee stay here. Let not the people say that thou carest not for thy mother and brethren, but preferrest to go thine own way. Stay here in quiet as thou wast wont to aforetime.

JESUS *replieth:*

The will of my heavenly Father that only can I follow. I have that to do ye wist not of. And for neither my mother nor my brethren can I refrain from doing it.

The BRETHREN *say:*

Thinkest thou then nothing of thy mother? Canst thou not take warning from the fate of John the Baptist? Knowest thou not that Herod, to please his daughter, hath had John beheaded in prison and caused his head to be brought in at supper on a charger?

JESUS *replieth:*

Thus I have heard, and it grieveth me sorely, for no prophet was greater than John the Baptist. But fear of Herod cannot deter me from doing the will of God. Well know I that many hate me and despise me. And ye, too, in your hearts think that I am possessed of a devil. But I have that to say which men must hear and a light to show that men must see. Anger the Pharisees I may, but the people clamour to hear me. They long to be free of the yoke that is on them, and I am here to win them from bondage to freedom. I have touched their souls, and their eyes are opening to a great light. The light that I see they also will see. The joy that I feel they will feel. Wouldst thou that I should leave them in bondage and darkness? Be ye of a braver courage!

While he is thus speaking the elders and the officials take their places in the seats of honour, and the RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE *cometh to him, and asketh him, saying:*

I pray thee for this Sabbath to act as leader of the congregation.

JESUS *ascendeth the steps to the chair, and, standing by the desk, beginneth the service by offering a prayer:*

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be

done, in earth as it is in heaven. And, O my Father, here in mine own home, make thy will be done and thy kingdom swiftly come. As it is in heaven so may it be here this very day. What thy Spirit hath revealed unto me reveal now to all present. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

And ALL THE PEOPLE *repeat:*

Amen.

Then followeth the Shema, spoken by all in unison:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

The MINISTER *then approacheth the Ark and bringeth forth the roll of the Prophets and handeth it to* JESUS. *He openeth it and searcheth for a certain passage, findeth it and readeth:*

Thus saith the prophet Esaias, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

JESUS *closeth the Book, giveth it again to the* MINISTER, *and sitteth down. The eyes of all that*

are in the synagogue are fastened on him, and He *saith:*

This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears. I am sent of God to deliver you from your bonds.

The People *are filled with a great awe, and say:*

None of the false Messiahs dare take these words of Esaias to himself as Jesus doth.

Jesus *continueth:*

Yea. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. And I am come to give unto you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that the Lord may be glorified. And as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness to spring forth before all the nations.

Some *wonder at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and murmur among themselves:*

This is indeed a prophet.

Others *say:*

Is not this Joseph's son? How can the son of a carpenter be a prophet? Why doeth he no wonder here and show that he is a prophet?

Jesus, *hearing them, saith unto them:*

Ye will surely say unto me the proverb,

Physician, heal thyself : whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in thine own country. Verily I say unto you, A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and great famine was throughout all the land ; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet ; and none of them was cleansed save Naaman the Syrian.

And ALL THEY *in the synagogue when they hear these things are full of wrath, and shout:*

Away with him ! A carpenter's son making himself out a prophet ! Joseph's son saying the Gentiles are better than we are !

Even his FRIENDS *say:*

What madness thus to touch the pride of the people ! Who now can save him ?

And the PEOPLE *shout the more, saying:*

Away with him ! Away with him to the brow of the hill ! Cast him down headlong ! Perish the false prophet !

JESUS *is hurried out of the synagogue.*

SCENE II

The second scene is set on the mountain-side. There are present JESUS *and his* DISCIPLES, NATHAN THE PHARISEE, *and a few others.*

JESUS *saith:*

It sorely grieveth me that mine own people should have so scornfully rejected me. Only good had I meant them. But a very scorpion they could not have cast forth with a greater loathing.

NATHAN *saith:*

Only thy calm saved thee from death. But with all the hatred against thee which the Pharisees have stirred up there is in the people a great awe of thee. In their hearts they fear to do thee harm. Nevertheless I would warn thee, O Jesus, that thou art not yet safe. Thou hast still to fear Herod. So I pray thee, Get thee out and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

JESUS *replieth:*

My brethren also so warned me at Nazareth. But who is Herod that he should bend me from my purpose? He hath sent some servants asking to see me. But it is merely to satisfy his perplexity, and I go not.

JOHN *addeth:*

The truth, O Nathan, is that Herod in his heart feareth the Master as he feared John. He thinketh that he is John the Baptist raised from the dead, or that he is Elias or one other of the prophets come to life again. And he is in doubt. That is why he wisheth to see the Master.

NATHAN *replieth:*

That may be true. But Herod beheaded John the Baptist and he may behead Jesus. His perplexity may turn to anger. He may be doubtful today. Tomorrow he may be angry. And the Pharisees also, I warn thee, O Jesus, mean to do thee harm. Thou lovest the poor and humble, and it is only hypocrisy and hardness of heart that rouseth thee to wrath. But thy wrath hath kindled hatred in the Pharisees and they mean to kill thee.

JOHN *saith:*

Perhaps if we showed greater loving-kindness towards the Pharisees they would not hate us so bitterly.

JAMES THE ZEALOT *vehemently answereth:*

I agree not with thee, John. The Master is right in pouring scorn upon the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He is too true of heart not to speak forth with his lips what is in his mind to utter.

PETER *saith to* JESUS :

Thou tellest us that if any smite us to turn the other cheek. But if the Pharisees smite thee, O Master, we will smite them back with all our might.

JAMES *addeth:*

Verily, we will be with thee. Thou asked us to be with thee, and we will be. Thou callest upon us to give up father and mother and wife and children and brother and sister for thy sake and the Gospel's, and even to hate our own lives. And we will freely give them.

JESUS *answereth and saith:*

The time is nigh at hand when I shall need thee. For now I steadfastly set my face to go to Jerusalem. And I must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and be slain and raised the third day.

SIMON PETER *saith:*

Be it far from thee, Lord. This thing shall not be unto thee.

But JESUS *rebuketh* PETER *and saith:*

Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. What doth it matter that I be slain so long as the will of God be done. For whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall

preserve it. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? Fear not therefore : ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Simon Peter *saith:*

Yea, Lord. We fear not. We will follow thee.

Jesus *saith:*

I trust thee, Simon Peter, and whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him : but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven. Be ye therefore true to the Holy Spirit of God that is in you, and harm shall never befall you.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.

The Disciples *with one accord say:*

Lord, for thy sake we will indeed love one another. We will show forth our love for thee in our love one for another.

And ANOTHER *also saith:*

Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

And JESUS *saith unto him:*

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

NATHAN *saith unto* JESUS:

Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

JESUS *saith unto him:*

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

JESUS *then calleth his* DISCIPLES *unto him and saith:*

Now I would send you forth to bear my message before me. Go ye two and two before my face into every city and place whither I myself will come. And hereby I give unto you power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. And as ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses. Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his

meat. Ye will bring them food for the spirit, and it is right that they should give you food for the body. Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it will not be ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And he that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

And think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother,

and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

But he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

ALL THE DISCIPLES *cry:*

We will bear thy words in everlasting remembrance and be faithful to thee even unto death.

They all depart (except PETER *and* JAMES *and* JOHN) *to prepare the way for him.*

And JESUS *saith to the three:*

Come ye into a high mountain apart.

And as they proceed thither JESUS *saith:*

When I see the people I am moved with compassion for them, for they are as sheep not having a shepherd. And there are many false prophets which come to them in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.

JAMES *saith unto* JESUS:

It is hard, Lord, for them to know the true from the false prophet.

JESUS *replieth:*

By their fruits they should know them. Do

men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit : but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

JOHN *saith:*

True, O Master. Yet the people have not the eyes to see the good fruit when it is there beside them. Thou hast shown them love, but they see it not.

JESUS *replieth:*

Strange is it that they see not. They long for the kingdom of God, and one thing only they need to find it : to love God and to love each other as children of the one Father. But blind are they. They see not that while their hearts are full of malice, envy, and all uncharitableness ; and while they backbite with their tongues, the kingdom of God can never be. And they understand not that if they would show to one another the spirit of charity and look upon the beam in their own eyes instead of the mote in their neighbour's, it would come forthwith. Why is it they are so blind? Why cannot they see the power of love and use it?

JOHN *replieth:*

Men are slow of heart and see but dimly. Yet what thou sayest is plain enough. Only to love. Only to act towards each other in the spirit of

love and forbearance. Then men would be bound together as one and be able to live in peace and give their lives to the service of God. So little is it to ask, so much to be gained.

JESUS *saith:*

And now stand ye apart for awhile that I may be alone with my Father.

PETER, JAMES *and* JOHN *withdraw aside and watch* JESUS *praying.*

JESUS *prayeth:*

O my Father, this long time have I been striving to make men see what I saw when thy Holy Spirit descended on me like a dove. In the light of that Spirit all is so clear and the world is so radiant. But not yet have I been able to make men see. By virtue of thy Spirit which is in me I have healed men. In body and in spirit I have made them whole. But the people listen to the Pharisees rather than to me. They throng not after me as they were wont at first when they came to see the wonders that I worked. And often am I sad of heart. Yet at least I have this band of faithful followers, and in them do I trust to spread abroad the glad tidings that thy kingdom is come. I pray thee, O my Father, that thy Holy Spirit may come upon them as it came upon me, that they also may be fashioned to spread through all the earth the glories of thy kingdom. Send down on them, I beseech thee, thy Holy

Spirit and fit them for thy kingdom. And let the day-spring from on high visit men, that their darkness may be lightened.

As JESUS *prayeth he is transfigured before them, the fashion of his countenance is altered, his face doth shine as the sun, and his raiment is white as the light. And behold, there appeareth unto them* MOSES *and* ELIAS *talking with him.*

PETER *then approacheth* JESUS *and saith unto him:*

Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

While PETER *yet speaketh, behold, a bright cloud overshadoweth them ; and a* VOICE *out of the cloud which saith:*

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.

The DISCIPLES *hearing the voice fall on their faces, and are sore afraid. And suddenly when they look round about them they see no man any more, save* JESUS *only with themselves. And* JESUS *cometh and toucheth them, saying:*

Arise and be not afraid.

They arise, and JESUS *chargeth them, saying:*

Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead.

And THEY *ask him, saying:*
Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

JESUS *answereth and saith unto them:*
Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

The DISCIPLES *say among themselves:*
He speaketh unto us of John the Baptist. John was Elias come back.

Then JESUS *asketh his* DISCIPLES, *saying:*
Whom say the people that I am?

THEY, *answering him, say:*
John the Baptist: but some say Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets.

JESUS *saith unto them:*
But whom say ye that I am?

SIMON PETER, *answering, saith:*
Thou art the Christ. We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

JESUS *saith:*
I straitly charge you all that ye tell no man that I am Jesus the Christ. The time to proclaim this is not yet. But this I say unto you, Blessed are

the eyes which see the things that ye see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them : and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them. And now I would once more be alone that I may pray to God before I depart for Jerusalem.

The DISCIPLES *leave him. And in that hour* JESUS *rejoiceth in spirit and saith:*

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Thou hast said through the mouth of the Prophet Esaias that thou wouldst give children to be our princes and that babes would rule over us. And these simple followers of mine are well worthy to tell men of thy kingdom. As for me, O Lord, slain I must be. But into thy hands do I commend my spirit. That thy kingdom may go forward is all my soul desireth. Sustain me, O my Father, as I now pass on into the midst of my enemies to suffer all that thou hast ordained for me.

ACT IV.—DARKNESS

SCENE I

The first scene is laid at Jerusalem in the palace of CAIAPHAS THE HIGH PRIEST. *The* HIGH PRIEST, *the members of the Sanhedrin, and others are assembled to discuss the appearance of* JESUS *in Jerusalem.*

JEHUDAH THE PHARISEE *saith:*

This man Jesus whom I have questioned in Galilee is now in Jerusalem with a great following. He hath been received with acclamation and is stirring up the people. It is time we made an end of him. He only bringeth trouble to Israel.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA *asketh:*

Why, what evil hath he done?

JEHUDAH *replieth:*

He tendeth to break up the nation. Just lately in Galilee some scribes and I questioned him, accusing him of breaking the Sabbath and of transgressing the tradition of the elders in that he and his disciples were wont to take meat with publicans and sinners and to eat with unwashen hands. But he heeded us not and is come here to Jerusalem and is doing the same evil.

SIMON THE PHARISEE *addeth:*

Yea, and he is continually hurling scorn upon us Pharisees. I heard him sneering at us and saying of us, Whatsoever they bid you observe that observe and do ; but do not after their works, for they say and do not. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men by neither going in themselves nor suffering them that wish to enter to go in.

JEHUDAH *saith:*

I also heard him railing against us. He called us fools and blind and hypocrites. He said also that we were like unto whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones. Outwardly we may appear righteous unto men, but within we were full of hypocrisy and iniquity. He called us serpents, a generation of vipers, and asked how we could escape the damnation of hell.

The HIGH PRIEST *declareth:*

Thus to hold up the leaders of the nation to derision before the people is a grave matter. If we leaders permit our nation to be broken up, we no longer abide by our covenant with God. We are his chosen people and must keep together. He who would break us up must suffer death.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA, *protesting, saith:*

I see not yet the evil that he hath done. They

say that he goeth about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people, calling them to repentance, and preaching that the kingdom of God is at hand. What evil is there in this?

JEHŪDAH *replieth:*

The evil is that the people think that he is a prophet. Some even say that he is the Messiah. And they may want to set him up as king. He may bring trouble upon us from the Roman authorities.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA *saith:*

I judge not. He was asked whether we should pay tribute unto Cæsar. And he replied, Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. He hath never preached the use of force.

The RULER OF THE TEMPLE *in great wrath exclaimeth:*

True, Joseph, but he hath himself used violent action in the very area of the Temple. He went into the Temple but a few days ago and cast out all them that sold and bought in the Temple and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves, saying, The house of God should be a house of prayer and not made a den of thieves.

JOSEPH *interrupteth and saith:*

In that he was right. The Temple should be kept undefiled.

The RULER OF THE TEMPLE *replieth:*

Truly the Temple should be kept undefiled. But who is this carpenter of Nazareth that he should thus defy us? Such violence is unseemly. It may spread. The people may break out in riot: and the Romans may punish us for not having quelled the disturbance. This Galilean is a danger. He should be destroyed. The people think he is the Messiah. Perhaps he thinketh so himself.

NATHAN, *protesting, saith:*

To me it seemeth that Jesus doth much more to keep the people quiet than to make them turbulent, and to keep the nation together than to break it asunder. He is as proud of Israel as thou art thyself, Jehudah. He frequently speaketh with pride of the sons of Abraham as the chosen people of God. And he always urgeth the people to keep the Law of Moses. Once when he cleansed a leper he enjoined him straightway to show himself to the priests, and offer for his cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them. And once in Galilee I heard him say that he was not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfil them. He knoweth well the Law; and the words of

the Prophets he oft repeateth. Sabbath after Sabbath he speaketh in the synagogues. And yearly he cometh to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Unleavened Bread. Can any Jew be more correct in his observances?

And never have I heard him oppose prayer and fasting. He only requireth that when men pray or fast or give alms they should do all from their hearts and not to receive praise of others. He hateth hypocrisy. For the hypocrite and the hard-hearted he hath no mercy. For all others he is moved with a great compassion.

JOSEPH *agreeth and saith:*

In all these things, O Caiaphas, hath not Jesus shown himself a true Jew glorying in his nation? And men say that when he sent forth his disciples to preach the Good News that all we have hoped for and prayed for these many years past was about to come to pass, he told them straitly not to go into the way of the Gentiles nor enter any city of the Samaritans, but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And though he hath healed scores of Jews, I have heard of only two Gentiles that he hath healed. The one was the servant of a centurion and the other a woman of Canaan. And the request of this last he had at first refused, saying, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. It was only after she had replied, Truth, Lord: yet the

dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table, that he said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt ; and that her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

When Jesus hath done all this for his own people and so little for the Gentiles, how canst thou, O Jehudah, say that he careth not for the nation? He hath never tried to set at naught the Law of Moses or to set up a new law of his own. All he requireth is that men's righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees so that they may hasten the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

JEHUDAH, *impatiently addressing the* HIGH PRIEST, *saith:*

What Joseph saith may be true, yet Jesus by his teachings and his deeds doth loosen men's obedience to the Law. His disciples break the Sabbath and disregard all difference between clean and unclean, and look with contempt upon those in authority. He causeth men to think that a change is coming—and a great and sudden change, and something that will happen in our own lifetime. They think he means to sweep away the old and bring in something new. And this unsettleth their minds. But we must keep up our old national way of life. It is that way which hath held us together amid our many enemies, and we must alway preserve it.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA *saith:*

But Jesus himself hath said that a house divided against itself falleth. He knoweth that if the nation be divided against itself it will fall. And he loveth the nation. How is it possible then that he would want to divide it?

JEHUDAH *replieth:*

He speaketh many words which may harm the nation, though he may mean it no ill. How shall we ever remove the ills to which we are subjected if we resist not evil as this man teacheth; or if we turn the left cheek when one smiteth us on the right; or if we sell all our goods to give to the poor? And how is family life to continue if we leave our families to follow after him or make ourselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake? If we do as this Jesus would have us, our nation and our very families will break up. No man will care to work or to make things more beautiful. The nation will fall to pieces. He doth naught to strengthen the nation. He breaketh it up by making each man think only of himself.

The HIGH PRIEST *hereupon saith:*

This Jesus is an ignorant man which knoweth not the harm he doeth. He disturbeth the people and may turn them away from us and cause them to look to him as their king. Our duty is to keep up the present order of things. And we have to keep on good terms with the Romans or we may

be deprived of our privileges. The matter is serious, and the Sanhedrin must make enquiry into it. This man Jesus must be brought before us that we may form a just judgment whether or no he be worthy of death. If he be, we must then send him before Pilate, the Governor. It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

A Captain of the Guard *hereupon stateth:*

One Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of Jesus' disciples, did come here and commune with me how he might betray him unto us. And I was glad and covenanted to give him money—namely, thirty pieces of silver. And he promised and seeketh opportunity to betray him unto us in the absence of the multitude.

The High Priest *commandeth:*

Seize him then privily by night that no disturbance may be caused among the people.

The Captain of the Guard *departeth.*

The High Priest *and members of the Sanhedrin take their seats in the Hall of Judgment.*

After an interval Jesus *is brought in bound before them.*

The High Priest *asketh* Jesus *of his* Disciples *and his doctrines:*

Thou art a teacher. What is it that thou teachest?

JESUS *answereth him:*

I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue and the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

When he had thus spoken ONE OF THE OFFICERS *which stood by striketh* JESUS *with the palm of his hand, saying:*

Answerest thou the High Priest so?

JESUS *answereth him:*

If I have spoken evil bear witness of this evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

The HIGH PRIEST *saith to the chief priests and elders and all the council:*

We must seek witnesses against Jesus to put him to death.

HE *calleth to the people assembled:*

Those who have heard aught against this man now come forward and bear witness.

Then there arose CERTAIN, *and bare false witness against him, saying:*

We heard him say, I will destroy the Temple that is made with hands, and within three days will build another made without hands.

But neither so doth their witness agree together. Then the HIGH PRIEST *standeth up in the midst and asketh* JESUS, *saying:*

Answereth thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?

But JESUS *holdeth his peace and answereth nothing.*

Many of the ELDERS *ask, saying:*

Art thou the Christ? Tell us.

And JESUS *saith unto them:*

If I tell you ye will not believe: and if I also ask you ye will not answer me nor let me go.

The HIGH PRIEST *then riseth, and with deep solemnity saith unto him:*

I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

JESUS *saith unto them:*

Thou hast said. Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the HIGH PRIEST *rendeth his clothes, saying:*

He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now ye have heard this blasphemy, He saith that he is Christ, the Son of God. What think ye? Is he guilty or not?

The MEMBERS *answer and say:*

He is guilty of death.

Then do the people spit in his face and buffet him; and others smite him with the palms of their hands, saying:

Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is it that smote thee?

The HIGH PRIEST *commandeth:*

Keep him bound, and take him away and deliver him to Pontius Pilate, the Governor.

JESUS *is bound and led forth.*

The HIGH PRIEST *and the scribes and elders and all the people then leave the palace.*

SCENE II

The second scene is laid in the Hall of Judgment. It is early in the day. The chief priests and the scribes and elders bring JESUS, *bound, to be tried by* PILATE, *the Governor. And as they stand without* THEY *say among themselves:*

We will speak such things unto the Governor as will cause him to condemn Jesus. The Roman careth not for our Jewish law : we must therefore show that Jesus is a danger to Roman rule.

They stop before the judgment hall and go not in lest they should be defiled ; but that they might eat the passover.

PILATE *then cometh out unto them and saith:*

What accusation bring ye against this man?

THEY *answer and say unto him:*

If he were not a malefactor we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

Then saith PILATE *unto them:*

Take ye him and judge him according to your law.

The ELDERS *reply:*

It is not lawful for us to set any man to death.

This man hath done what is worthy of death. Therefore bring we him to thee.

Then began they to accuse JESUS, *saying:*

We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king.

Then, turning to JESUS, THEY *say unto him:*

We, the chief priests and elders, accuse thee, Jesus, of perverting the nation, of saying thou art the Christ, and of making thyself a king.

JESUS *answereth nothing.*

Then saith PILATE *unto him:*

Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

But JESUS *answereth him never a word.*

PILATE *saith to himself:*

I marvel greatly at this man's silence.

PILATE *then entereth into the judgment hall again and calleth* JESUS.

JESUS *entereth the judgment hall while the chief priests and scribes remain without.*

PILATE *saith unto* JESUS :

Art thou the King of the Jews?

JESUS *answereth him:*

Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

PILATE *answereth:*

Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?

JESUS *answereth:*

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

PILATE *therefore saith unto him:*

Art thou a king then?

JESUS *answereth:*

Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.

PILATE *saith unto him:*

What is truth?

And when he had said this HE *went out again unto the Jews and saith unto them:*

I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

Then cried THEY ALL *again, saying:*

Not this man, but Barabbas—Barabbas the robber.

And THEY *were the more fierce, saying:*

He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

And THEY *cried all at once, saying:*

Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.

PILATE, *willing to release* JESUS, *speaketh again to them:*

Ye have brought this man unto me as one having perverted the people; and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. I will therefore chastise him and release him.

But THEY *are instant with loud voices and cry, saying:*

Crucify him, crucify him.

And when PILATE *seeth that he can prevail nothing, but rather a tumult is made, taketh water and washeth his hands before the multitude and saith:*

I am innocent of the blood of this just man: see ye to it.

ALL THE PEOPLE *answer and say:*

His blood be on us, and on our children.

PILATE *ordereth the soldiers:*

Scourge this man Jesus.

The SOLDIERS *take him and strip him and put on him a scarlet robe. And they plat a crown of thorns, and they put it on his head, and a reed in his hand: and they bow the knee before him, and mock him, saying:*

Hail, King of the Jews.

And they smite him on the head with a reed, and do spit upon him, and bowing their knees worship him.

And PILATE *cometh forth again and saith unto the Jews:*

Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

Then cometh JESUS *forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the scarlet robe. And* PILATE *saith unto them:*

Behold the man!

When the CHIEF PRIESTS *therefore and* OFFICERS *see him they cry out, saying:*

Crucify him, crucify him. We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

When PILATE *therefore heareth that saying he is the more afraid, and goeth again into the judgment hall, and calleth* JESUS *to him and saith unto him:*

Whence art thou?

But JESUS *giveth no answer.*

Then saith PILATE *unto him:*
Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

JESUS *answereth:*
Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

From thenceforth PILATE *seeketh to release him and goeth out again and saith to the Jews:*
I will now release this man, for I find no fault in him.

But the JEWS *cry out, saying:*
If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

When PILATE *therefore heareth that saying he bringeth* JESUS *forth, and sitteth down in the judgment-seat in a place that is called the Pavement, and saith unto the Jews:*
Behold your King!

But THEY *cry out:*
Away with him, away with him; crucify him.

PILATE *saith unto them:*
Shall I crucify your King?

The CHIEF PRIESTS *answer:*
We have no king but Cæsar.

Then delivereth HE *him therefore unto them:*
Take him and crucify him as ye will.

Then PILATE *writeth a title and putteth it on the cross. And the writing is:*
JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then say the CHIEF PRIESTS *of the Jews to* PILATE:
Write not, The King of the Jews: but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

PILATE *answereth:*
What I have written I have written.
Then they take JESUS *and lead him away to be crucified.*
PILATE *and his attendants withdraw from the judgment hall.*
Mournful music is played.

After an interval PILATE *again entereth the judgment hall and saith unto himself:*
My wife did plead with me to have nothing to do with that just man, for she had suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. And I would wish to have released him, but feared a tumult.

Then cometh unto him JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA, *which also waited for the kingdom of God,*

and he goeth in boldly to PILATE *and saith unto him:*

Jesus hath been crucified and is dead. I crave of thee his body. For he was a good man, and I consented not to the counsel and deed of accusation; and I would lay his body in a sepulchre.

PILATE, *being astonished, asketh him:*

Sayest thou he is already dead?

JOSEPH *replieth:*

Yea, for he was weak and in great anguish of soul. He had worked only for the good of the people. But even his disciples had forsaken him and fled; only some women remained faithfully by him.

PILATE *asketh the Centurion:*

Hath he been any while dead?

The CENTURION *answereth:*

He died in three hours.

PILATE *asketh* JOSEPH:

Why wantest thou the body of Jesus?

JOSEPH *answereth:*

Because, as I have said unto thee, this Jesus was a good man, and I would fain make what amend I can for the evil that hath been done. In the very act of death he reviled not his enemies, but prayed, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. What better proof could we have of his goodness?

PILATE *replieth:*

This is a new thing indeed! Never have I heard a man pray for them who have done him to death. Take thou his body to do with as thou wilt.

JOSEPH *thanketh* PILATE:

I thank thee, O Governor, that thou hast enabled me to do this little for one in whose heart was no hate, but only love.

PILATE *replieth:*

Verily he had a heart of love. That he should pray for his enemies as they are actually taking his life—what greater love can any man show?

ACT V.—THE DAY-SPRING

SCENE I

The first scene is laid in the upper house of a room in Jerusalem. There are present PETER *and* JAMES *and* JOHN, *and three of those that did follow after* JESUS, *but which were not of his disciples.* PETER *saith unto the followers:*

Have ye heard the wonderful thing that hath happened? I have seen the Lord!

The FIRST FOLLOWER *objecteth, saying:*

How can such things be, seeing that he was crucified and is dead and is buried?

PETER *replieth:*

True it is that the Lord hath been taken from us in the flesh. But with mine own eyes have I seen him in his spiritual body.

The FOLLOWER *asketh* PETER, *saying:*

How can one be alive who is dead? Tell us truly what hath happened.

PETER, *answering, saith:*

It was in this wise. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when

they had heard that he was alive, and been seen of her, believed not.

The FOLLOWER, *interrupting, saith:*

I well understand that they believed not the witness of Mary. Who else saw him?

PETER *replieth:*

He appeared in another form unto two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. After that he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen him after that he was risen.

The FIRST FOLLOWER *saith:*

I see not why he should upbraid men for not believing. How can we believe that a man who was once dead can be alive?

The SECOND FOLLOWER *exclaimeth:*

Hast thou not heard of John the Baptist being raised from the dead? Or of Moses and Elias appearing unto men? If Moses and Elias have appeared, why should not Jesus? In his body we may not see him. But his spiritual presence will be ever with us. And this spiritual presence is really he.

JOHN *saith unto the* FOLLOWER:

That is so. He is buried a natural body and

he is raised a spiritual body. As Peter hath said, Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, and saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? And she, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Then the same day at evening, when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye shall retain, they are retained.

PETER *saith:*

This truly is what Jesus said. Now let us take meat together as we were wont to with him.

They all sit at table, and bread and wine are put before them, and PETER *saith to the followers:*

As we did eat at the last supper on the night on which our Lord was seized, and when he knew in his heart that his end was nigh, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake it, and gave it to us, saying, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to us: and we all drank of it. And he said unto us, This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many.

This is what Jesus said at the last supper. Now therefore let us take bread and eat it, and take the cup and drink it in remembrance of him.

They all take bread and break it and eat it.

And they take the cup and give thanks and drink of it.

And when they have all eaten of the bread and drunk of the cup in remembrance of JESUS, *a* FOLLOWER *saith:*

This crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth was indeed a wicked act. All we who heard him felt his power and authority. Yet he was a gentle man withal and never counselled violence. Many there were who would willingly have come with swords and with staves and set him up as our King in Jerusalem. But he would have none of it.

PETER *answereth:*

Thou speakest truly. He was always gentle.

When soldiers came to seize him, and I, having a sword, drew it and smote the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear, Jesus said unto me, Put up thy sword into the sheath : the cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it? All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Suffer ye thus far.

JOHN *addeth:*

It goeth to my heart the more that we should have forsaken him. Dost thou remember, James, how he suffered that night in the garden of Gethsemane? Slow of heart were we and weak in the hour of trial.

JAMES *replieth:*

Yea, for all the loving-kindness he showed us we gave naught in return. It is not good that we should have left him to be alone when his enemies were gathering round about him, and even God would seem to have withdrawn from him.

JOHN, *addressing the followers, saith:*

Maybe ye have heard not what happened. Thus was it. He left the rest of the disciples and took us three with him apart while he prayed. And he began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy : and he saith unto us, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death : tarry ye here and watch.

And he went forward a little and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

PETER, *scarce able to restrain himself, interrupteth* JOHN *and saith:*

And he cometh and findeth us sleeping and saith unto me, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away and prayed, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And when he returned he found us asleep again (for our eyes were heavy), neither wist we what to answer him. And he prayed a third time, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were drops of blood falling to the ground.

The FOLLOWER *exclaimeth:*

Truly the agony of his pure and righteous soul must have been exceeding sore.

PETER *replieth:*

We were slow of heart then and heeded not what manner of man he truly was. Now we know him as we never did when we were daily with him. Now he hath appeared to us we feel his presence ever with us. And whatsoever he would have us do that henceforth will we do. Right gladly for his sake will we face our enemies and death itself. His love we will make everywhere prevail. We now know our task and are eager for it. Already we his disciples worship him with a great joy, and are continually in the Temple praising and blessing God. And we expect greater things to come. The Lord bid us tarry here in Jerusalem until we be endued with power from on high ; and we await the fulfilment of his promise.

JOHN, *commending what* PETER *hath said, addeth:*

I bring to mind how when our Lord was yet with us he told us, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth. And the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I had said unto you.

MORE PERSONS *now arrive till the room is full. And it is the Day of Pentecost, and they are all of one accord in one place praying:*

O God our Father, endue us with power from on high. Come, thou Spirit of truth! Come, thou Comforter. Come, thou Holy Ghost. Come down upon us, we beseech thee.

Suddenly there cometh a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filleth all the house where they are sitting. And there appear unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sitteth upon each of them. And they are all filled with the Holy Ghost, and begin to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

We thank thee, O God! We thank thee, O Jesus, that thou hast shed forth thy Holy Spirit on us. Now we are comforted. Now we brim over with power. Now all things are possible. We bless thee. We glorify thee. Be thou ever with us.

Then PETER *standeth up and saith:*

Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit and they shall prophesy. Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among

you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up whereof we are all witnesses.

Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.

Now when they from outside hear this, THEY *are pricked in their hearts, and say unto* PETER *and the others:*

Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Then PETER *saith unto them:*

Repent ye and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Then they gladly receive his words and say unto him:

We repent. Baptise us therefore in the name of Jesus Christ that we too may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And PETER *baptiseth them, and they praise God, saying:*

Glory be to thee, O God. Glory everlasting.

And PETER *saith unto them:*

When Jesus showed himself alive after his passion he said unto us that we should receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon us, and that we should be witnesses to him both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And now that the Holy Ghost is indeed come upon us and we have received power, it is meet that we continue in one accord with prayer and supplication and proclaim the kingdom of God through all the world. Let our hearts rejoice and our tongues be glad. And may our flesh rest in hope. For God will make known to us the ways of life and fill us with the joy of his countenance. Go we now forth.

They all depart.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

A Voice *from heaven saith:*

Thus did I give the gift of the Holy Ghost to those assembled on the Day of Pentecost. And the same gift will I give to you present here today if ye prepare yourselves for it. With power from on high will I endue you. This is my promise, and bountifully will I keep it. Have faith and power will be yours.

And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Freedom I have given you. For without freedom there can be no goodness; and without goodness there can be no joy. Without the risk of doing evil there can be no joy in doing good. Ye are free to do evil, and therefore goodness is possible unto you.

And evil ye have done. And the sins ye have committed must ever remain. Their consequences none can remove.

But if ye repent you of your sins I will make of them the very way by which ye shall be drawn unto me. Out of evil itself will I make good to come. I will make it an instrument for a more abundant goodness.

For mine is a redeeming love. And with a stretched-out arm will I redeem your souls of every transgression. By the renewing of your minds shall ye be transformed into angels. And ye shall rejoice and be mine.

I am redeeming love. But I am more than love.

The purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth and the perfection of beauty ye see on every hand are witness to my wisdom, my power, and my love.

But I am beyond what the greatest among you can conceive of goodness and beauty, wisdom and power. I am beyond even the most perfect love.

I am all these molten by the fire of my glory into one.

I am all holiness. Holiness is my name.

I am the Holy Spirit in the heart of the world. And the beauty of my holiness shineth forth through every part.

Wheresoever ye look ye see the operations of my hand. And my work of creation never ceaseth. Always and everywhere my activity proceedeth.

Throughout all the world and throughout all time my work perpetually goeth forward.

I never rest. For I am the process of time which halteth not, which always hath been, and which will ever be.

I am the inmost centre of the world. Yet through the breadth and height of the whole starry firmament doth the amplitude of my glory extend. The furthest heavens and the inhabitants thereof declare my wondrous works.

I am in the light that speedeth for a million years from remotest starry gatherings; and I am in the unceasing swirl of unseen earthly atoms.

I am the thunder that thundereth from the loudest clouds. And I am the deep, sweet calm of storm-swept skies at eventide.

I am the Holy One before whom the proudest bend in awe as the eye withdraweth from the sun. And I am the charm in children that draweth all men to them.

And I am the splendour of the lily, and the love that lighteth in the eyes of youth and maiden and beameth from a mother on her first-born.

From me proceedeth all that is. Of and by me are all things created. Thus ye are my offspring. I am in each of you as each of you is in me.

But I am nearer to you than a father is to his son. I am near to you as Israel is to the children of Israel. As they are born out of Israel, so are ye born out of me. As they remain ever in Israel, so do ye remain ever in me. As the spirit of Israel is in all the children of Israel, so is my Spirit in all of you.

In you I live and move and have my being. I am in you as ye are in each thought ye think and each deed ye do. I am in you as the oak is in the acorn. And as the acorn groweth up in the image of the oak, so do ye grow up in the image of me.

And I have given you the power of choice. Ye can choose the evil or the good, the good or the better, the better or the best. Ye can be beasts or men, men or angels. Ye can walk in the plains, or ye can ascend into the hills, or ye can climb the mountains. The choice is yours.

It is easier to be evil than good; to be good than better; to be better than best. It is easy to walk on the plains, and it is hard to ascend the hill and dangerous to climb the mountain.

But as ye put more of yourselves into climbing the mountain than into walking on the plain, so do I put more of myself into you when ye strive to be best than when ye are content only to be good.

I have made men of beasts; and now I would make angels of men. And as ye strive to be saints, I will put my spirit into you. And as I enter into your spirit, do ye likewise enter into mine.

Long have ye prayed that my kingdom should come and my will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And my will must needs be done.

None can prevent it. For mark ye, that I, the Lord, am myself creating mine own kingdom.

But I create it through mine own creatures. And always from among the thousand thousands of them I am choosing those who are fittest to carry out the purpose of my love.

Always I am choosing those who know how to love and who love the things that are pure and holy.

And into the chosen few that are untarnished and unstained and able to endure great hardness I pour out the spirit of my love that they may be joyful partakers with me of the work for my kingdom.

They must be men of a willing heart who will be ready to learn my will and submit themselves to it. Willingness I must have. But also I require of them whom I choose that they shall prepare themselves for my work.

Holy men I need. Men like little children. Men with the innocence of great knowledge, sweet and clean of life.

A little child must lead you.

I am in each of you as each of you is in me. But I am also high above and beyond you. And I would that ye reach up after me as the lark that soareth to heaven and in soaring ever striveth to sing sweeter.

Then verily will my Holy Spirit descend upon

you as it descended first upon Jesus and thereafter upon his disciples.

Like him and like them, ye shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. I will cause you to share in my holiness. As I breathed my Holy Spirit on them, so will I breathe it upon you.

I will breathe a fire into you the light whereof will show you the love that burneth in the heart of the world. Ye shall have a vision of my kingdom. And ye will yearn to do my will and bring my kingdom to pass on earth as it is in heaven. And ye will hasten forth to win men to my glory.

When that day cometh, be ye true to the heavenly vision. Dare aspire to be God-men. Am not I in you? Am not I working without cease to make you more in mine own image? Then wherefor do ye falter? Why hold ye back?

Be ye holy even as I am holy. Seek ye after the holiness which cometh from fervent love of me. Put holiness before all else. Have faith and ye shall be holy as a little child.

And ye nations of men be ye also holy. For who can be holy in an unholy country?

And let every nation see to it that each member be helped to make himself holy before me.

And let each nation aspire to be a Christ-nation set on creating my kingdom upon earth.

And all ye nations together be ye holy as one

nation. For how can any be happy while a single other nation is unholy?

Men and great nations of men; nations and great Nation of nations, be ye holy.

And ye that hear me be more than bearers of my message. Be ye doers. Be ye active workers with me.

For I need you as ye need me. Only through you can I set up my kingdom, as only through her prophets could Israel set up the kingdom of Israel.

In working for me ye will suffer much. Ye will have to endure anguish of body, of mind, and of spirit. But suffering is my means for your good. Without suffering there can be no joy. And suffering deterreth from the evil and quickeneth the understanding. Without it your souls would be as flint, and ye could never love. Already ye have striven and suffered full well. And for the sacrifices ye have made for my kingdom's sake I thank you.

I am no indifferent and distant beholder. I am a strong striver with you. As ye suffer, so do I suffer. And as a mother pitieth her children, even so pity I you; and with all my great heart I love you for the pains ye have endured for my sake.

Every morning-hymn of birds, every song and prayer of men ascendeth to me. Not one but

reacheth me. And my heart goeth most lovingly out to my creatures for the devotion they show me.

Continue ye in well doing, and I will make you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you. Be ye of good courage. Behold, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.

My love will never leave you, and in my everlasting arms will I bear you up.

Therefore press forward into the kingdom ye are helping me to make.

Sing, rejoice, and be glad.

The CHOIR *singeth:*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above, Angelic host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Oh, praise the Lord of heaven : praise him in the height,
Praise him, all ye angels of his : praise him, all his host.
Praise him, sun and moon : praise him, all ye stars and light,
Praise him, all ye heavens : and ye waters that are above the heavens,
Mountains and all hills : fruitful trees and all cedars,
Beasts and all cattle ; worms and feathered fowls ;

Kings of the earth and all people : princes and all judges of the world ;
Young men and maidens ; old men and children, praise ye the Lord.
Praise him in his holiness : praise him in the firmament of his Power ;
Praise him in the cymbals and dances ; praise him upon the strings and pipe ;
Let everything that hath breath : praise the Lord.

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